

Spring

In New England

How **2** >>

As the weather warms, the Northeast offers some of its most dramatic

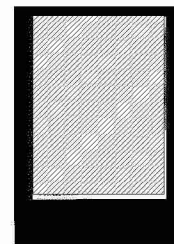
With winter expelling its last cold breaths of the season, it's time to think about moving outdoors to capture some of the year's most vibrant colors. The New England area is highly regarded by nature photographers everywhere for its dramatic scenic views as well as its explosion of hues, from verdant ground cover and trees to brilliant floral displays. Jerry and Marcy Monkman are a local photography team who make a living exploring this area and its rich photographic possibilities. They offer their tips and techniques for taking full advantage of spring in New England.

△ Oak Tree, White Mountains, Sandwich, New Hampshire

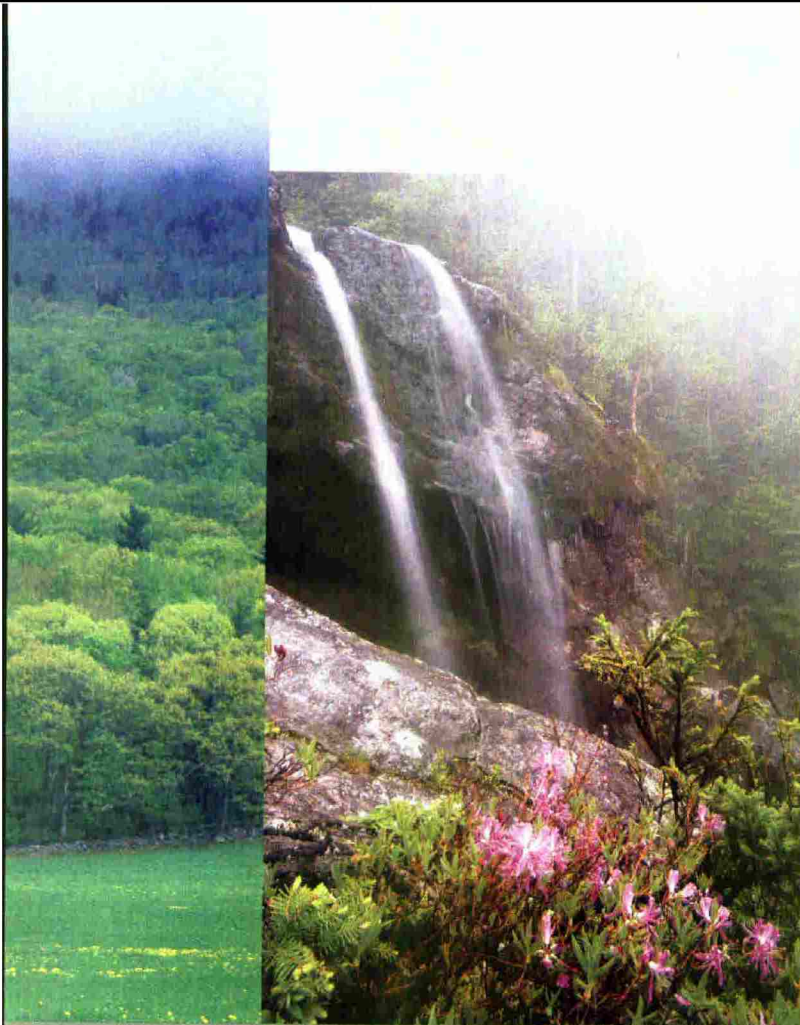
In the White Mountains, the trees start to bud around the third week of May and show a good variety of color for a few weeks before everything goes green. In the Whites, you don't often find many great landscapes to photograph by following the usual routes. You either need to get out on the trail or explore the back roads of towns like Sandwich, Tamworth, Franconia and Jefferson, which is why my car always contains a copy of the Delorme *New Hampshire Atlas and Gazetteer*. It's indispensable for finding my way around the mountains and identifying potential photo locations; I found this oak tree in a field while en route to a hike up Mount Israel.

For this photo, I chose to simplify the scene to include only the tree, the hillside and a bit of the fog. Using a telephoto lens allowed me to isolate the tree while compressing the scene sufficiently to give the hillside enough height to create the sense of place I was after. Including the fog at the top of the image enhances the mood of the photo, letting the viewer feel the air of that misty, spring morning in the mountains.

Pentax 67, Pentax 300mm f/4.0, Fujichrome Velvia



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◀ Waterfall, Ammonoosuc Ravine, Mount Washington, New Hampshire

Like the Green Mountains, New Hampshire's White Mountains are full of waterfalls that are at their best in the spring. Finding flowers as foreground material for those waterfalls can be a challenge, however, as most falls are under heavy forest canopy where most flowers don't bloom except for small, early spring ephemerals. The exception is the high country of the Presidential Range where streams can tumble for a 1,000 feet or more before they reach substantial forest. Spring up high doesn't get started until after Memorial Day and lasts well into July.

This is rugged country, so I usually use my lightest tripod, and I always bring rain gear as the high peaks of the Whites create their own weather—fog, drizzle, rain, sleet, snow—anything is possible any time of year. To keep my gear dry during the drizzle under which this photo was taken, I used the highest of high-tech gear: an umbrella. I kept a few lens cloths handy for wiping the stray raindrops that did make it onto my lens.

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8, polarizer

and colorful vistas

By Jerry Monkman / Photography By Jerry And Marcy Monkman

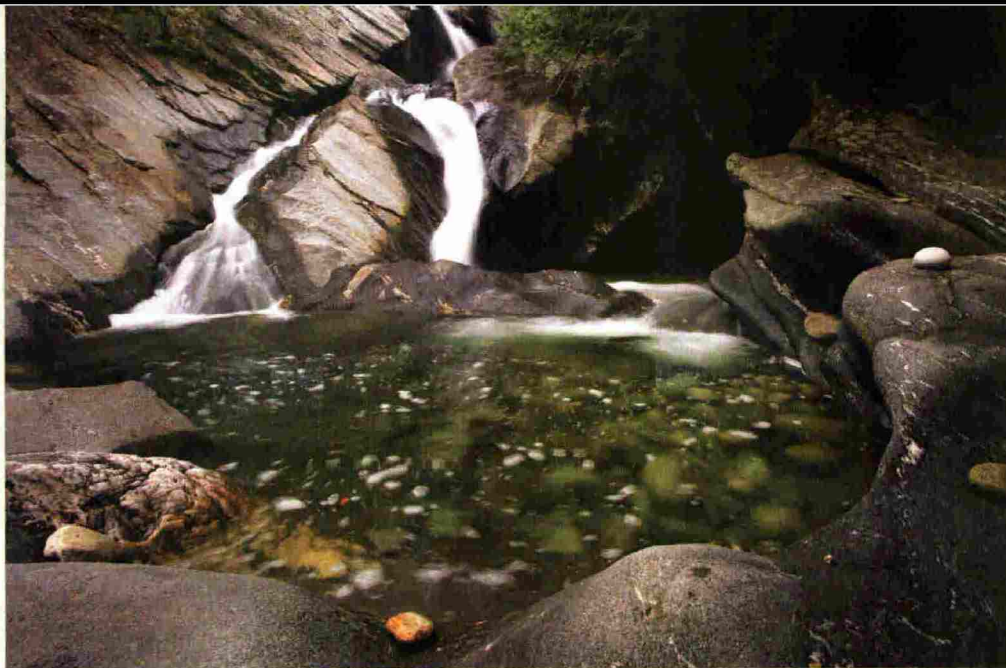


◀ Sunset, Jordan Pond, Acadia National Park, Maine

Acadia National Park is much quieter in the spring than during the summer and fall foliage season. Compelling sunrise photography locations are numerous in this coastal park, but good sunset spots are less common. One of my favorite places for sunset is Jordan Pond. It has great glacial landscape features, it's a short walk from the parking lot, and it supports interesting wildflowers along its shore.

Here, I was lucky to have calm water (the waves can get a foot or higher with a strong wind out of the north) and beautiful skies. In order to hold detail in both the sky and foreground rocks, I used a two-stop graduated split neutral-density filter. While I usually opt for my three-stop filter, I used the two-stop version to keep the reflections just a shade darker than the sky.

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8, Lee two-stop graduated split neutral-density filter



△ **Hamilton Falls, Jamaica State Park, Green Mountains, Vermont**

Springtime is waterfall time in New England, and Vermont's Green Mountains are full of them. Many, like Hamilton Falls in the southern Green Mountains, require hiking several miles to get there. When I need to travel more than a couple of miles under my own power, I usually opt to bring a smaller carbon-fiber tripod to reduce the amount of weight I carry; I currently use a Gitzo Mountaineer GT2530. In order to increase the stability of a smaller tripod, I hang my camera bag off the bottom of the center post, which helps to weight it down. I used a polarizer here, this time to reduce the glare on the pool of water, allowing the color of the streambed to show through. I also used my wide-angle zoom lens at 16mm in order to include the shape of the sculpted rocks that encircle the pool as a foreground subject.

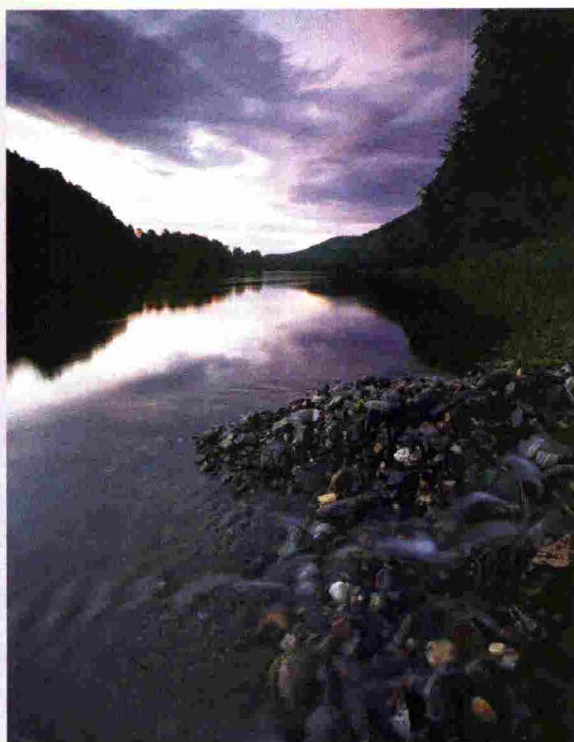
Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8, polarizer

Stream At Dusk, Connecticut River, ▷ Plainfield, New Hampshire

The Connecticut River Valley is New England's largest watershed, and in its 400-plus miles, it flows through most of the region's classic geographic features: moose-filled boreal forests, rugged mountains, fertile farmlands and sprawling coastal wetlands. In spring, water levels are usually high, but can fluctuate dramatically depending on snowmelt and rainfall. High water can make it challenging to access the river for photography, however, because for most of its length, the river's banks are heavily forested. I found this location while exploring NH Route 10 in Plainfield. For about half of its length, the Connecticut River forms the border between New Hampshire and Vermont, and there are good roads on both sides of the river worth exploring; in Vermont, try US 5 and VT 102; in New Hampshire, try US 3, NH 10 and NH 12.

For this image, it was essential to use a tripod to get low to the ground; I mounted the ballhead directly on top of the tripod without a center column.

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8, Lee three-stop graduated split neutral-density filter, Gitzo Mountaineer G1348 tripod, Kirk ballhead





◀ Spruce Forest Near Stratton Pond, Green Mountains, Vermont

The Green Mountains are thickly forested and crisscrossed with a myriad of hiking trails, backcountry dirt roads and rushing streams to explore. In spring, I enjoy venturing into the woods, searching for compositions that feature the rich greens of spring that seem to peak from the middle of May to mid-June.

A shot like this fern-laden forest scene works best in even overcast light as long as you keep the sky out of the composition. I almost always use a polarizer in the woods to reduce glare on wet or waxy vegetation, allowing colors to pop. With low light in the forest and the use of a polarizer, I'm often faced with

long exposure times, sometimes several minutes. I previously relied on my watch for timing these exposures, but now I use Canon's TC-80N3 Timer Remote cable release, which allows me to set an exposure time of any length I choose.

Nikon F100, AF Nikkor 28mm f/2.8, Fujichrome Velvia 50, polarizer

▽ Rhodora In Bloom, Acadia National Park, Maine

Wildflowers are abundant in Acadia in May and June, particularly on the shorelines of ponds, on the sides of the park's carriage roads and in the sub-alpine meadows on the park's granite domes. There's also a cultivated wildflower garden in the park, and the wonderful zen landscape of the Asticou Azalea Garden is just outside of the park in Northeast Harbor. For my flower photography, I prefer to use a 100mm f/2.8 macro lens. It's bright, making it easy to compose my images. It also has a good working distance (about 12 inches for 1:1), which means I can shoot in dewy conditions without worrying about touching my lens to the wet surface of leaves and flowers, as



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often happens with a shorter focal length.

Situated on an island in the Gulf of Maine, Acadia gets plenty of fog, mist and drizzle. For this photo of rhodora, I used a polarizer in the overcast light to saturate

the colors. For some reason, my camera had trouble automatically setting the white balance, so I also photographed a white card in the same light and created a custom white balance later in Adobe Lightroom by using the eyedropper tool on the white card photo and applying the resulting white balance to this flower photo.

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro, polarizer

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Jerry Monkman has coauthored six books with his wife **Marcy**, most recently *Wild Acadia*. In the summer of 2008, he leads photo tours to Acadia and Western Ireland. For more information, visit www.jerryandmarcymonkman.com.